



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Enclosure 5a7
December 8, 2020

Angélica Infante-Green
Commissioner

December 8, 2020

TO: Members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

FROM: Angélica Infante-Green, Commissioner *A. Infante*

RE: **Wangari Maathai Community School – Proposal for a New Charter**

In accordance to R.I.G.L. §16-77.3-3, proposals for a new charter require the action of the Council of Elementary and Secondary Education. Further, when considering the overall merits of a proposed charter, R.I.G.L. § 16-77.3-3 requires the Council to place substantial weight on the fiscal impact on the city or town, programmatic impact on the sending school district, and the educational impact on the students in the sending district to ensure that the proposal is economically prudent for the city or town, and academically prudent for the proposed sending school district and for all students in the sending district.

RIDE, in partnership with the external evaluator SchoolWorks, has conducted an in-depth review of the proposed charter, including Wangari Maathai Community School's (Wangari Maathai) proposed academic model, public feedback, and the impact that the proposed charter would have on local communities.

RIDE has concluded that the proposal submitted by Wangari Maathai is not satisfactory at this time, and is therefore, not recommended for preliminary approval. Applicants may choose to use the feedback provided throughout the evaluation process to refine their school model and submit a new charter proposal in subsequent charter application cycles.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to deny preliminary approval for the charter proposal submitted by Wangari Maathai Community School.

Enclosed Documents:

The following documents provide further detail regarding the Commissioner's recommendation and analysis contributing to that recommendation:

- Commissioner's Recommendation Overview and a detailed overview of Wangari Maathai's proposal
- Summary of the quality evaluation for the proposal
- Wangari Maathai's Response to the Commissioner's recommendation
- RIDE's local impact analysis (educational, programmatic, and fiscal) for Providence
- Any local impact analyses submitted by the public pertaining to the proposal at hand
- Review of the financial records of the establishing entity, Southside Community Land Trust, and the financial plan for Wangari Maathai by the Office of the Auditor General



Wangari Maathai Public Charter School

Commissioner's Recommendation & Proposal Overview

Commissioner's Recommendation: Deny

Summary of Proposal

Proposed Charter Overview			
Charter Type:	Independent	Year Opening:	2021-22
Location of School:	Providence	Grade Level (At-Scale):	K-8
Enrolling Communities:	Providence	Enrollment (At-Scale):	378

School Mission & Model	
School Mission:	"The mission of Wangari Maathai is to nurture K-8 students to achieve academic excellence, develop a growth mindset, and practice enthusiastic and impactful stewardship of their communities."
School Model:	Wangari Maathai proposes to open a K-8 school located in Providence that will serve students of diverse racial, social, and economic backgrounds. The school will implement a place-based learning model that utilizes a student-centered, experiential curriculum and integrates health and wellbeing, social justice, and environmental sustainability.

Proposed Enrollment			
Charter Year	School Year	Grades	Total Student Enrollment
Year 1	2021-22	K, 1, 2, 4, 6	130
Year 2	2022-23	K-3, 5-7	194
Year 3	2023-24	K-4, 6-8	236
Year 4	2024-25	K-8	278
Year 5	2025-26	K-8	298
Year 9 (At-Scale)	2029-30	K-8	378

Overview of Public Comment	
Public Comment Period	September 29, 2020 to December 1, 2020
Public Hearings	Two public hearings were held virtually via Zoom for Wangari Maathai: 1) October 21, 2020; 2) October 28, 2020
Summary of Received Public Comments	RIDE received 30 spoken and written comments during the public comment period. Of the 30 received public comments, 28 comments (93%) supported the proposal and 2 comments (7%) opposed the proposal.



Wangari Maathai Public Charter School

Commissioner's Recommendation & Proposal Overview

Commissioner's Recommendation: Deny

Overview of Commissioner's Recommendation

Summary of Recommendation	
Recommended Action:	The Commissioner recommends that the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education move to <u>deny preliminary approval</u> to Wangari Maathai's proposal.
Key Recommendation Drivers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While Wangari Maathai proposes a school model that was recommended through SchoolWorks' quality evaluation process, the applicant group does not provide sufficient data to clearly demonstrate a need for the school, or that the school will enhance or expand opportunities in the community. • Wangari Maathai previously submitted applications to RIDE in 2016 and 2017, and was preliminarily approved in 2017; however, the school did not open at that time. In addition to not securing a facility, the applicant team struggled to meet pre-opening requirements in a timely, clear, and consistent manner. Additionally, lack of community support was a central issue that prevented Wangari from ultimately securing a facility by the statutory deadline in 2019. • In their 2020 application, the applicant group describes community outreach efforts that were conducted during previous application cycles, and indicated that they have started to reinitiate families who previously applied to the school; however, no evidence of community outreach that has taken place since the winter of 2019 was provided; therefore, it is unclear to what extent they have conducted community outreach in recent months. During the capacity interview, the applicant group discussed past community outreach efforts but did not identify any community outreach conducted in the past year. • The applicant group does not present a clear, cohesive curriculum plan. While they indicate developing curriculum internally, they lack planning and implementation details, such as how curriculum will be developed, evaluated, and refined, as well as a clear timeline for completing the development of curriculum for Year 1 or beyond. • The application was rated "yes" on 55% of the application standards, and "mostly" for 40% of the application standards evaluated by SchoolWorks in the quality evaluation. It did not meet 5% of the application standards (one standard).

Request for Proposals for New Student Seats: **Evaluator's Guide**

Office of Charter Schools

Rhode Island Department of Education

2020 Review of New Seat Proposals: New Schools

Comment Summary Sheet

Name of Charter Proposal: Wangari Maathai Community School

Evaluator Name: Robin C. Hull

Date Completed: November 20, 2020

Summary of Comments			
Does this section meet the overall standard of quality?	NO	MOSTLY	YES
1. Cover Sheet			
2. Executive Summary			
3. Mission Statement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Proposed New Students and Enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Community Need and Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Educational Program			
a. Guiding Principles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Curriculum and Coursework	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Learning Environment and Pedagogy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Specific Populations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Assessment System	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Promotion/Graduation Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. School Culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Organizational Capacity			
a. Establishing Persons or Entities and	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Applicant Groups			
c. Board Development and Duties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Staffing Plans,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Leadership, and			
f. Teachers			
g. Management Organizations/Essential Partners and	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h. Family-School Partnership			
9. Facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10. Operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
11. Finance and Budget	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Schedule and Calendar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Start-up Timeline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Variances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Charter School Program Intent to Apply	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appendix A: Required Attachments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Overall Submission	NO	MOSTLY	YES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the proposal adhere to all formatting and submission criteria, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-inch margins? 12-point font? A table of contents that references all sections of the narrative and all attachments? Page numbers on each page, including on attachments? 70 pages double-spaced, excluding attachments? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A. Is the request free of typographical and grammatical errors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B. Are citations used for all references and/or excerpts? (Footnotes requested as a citation style)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Upon evaluating the quality of the submitted proposal, interview, and the performance tasks, SchoolWorks recommends that the Rhode Island Department of Education consider recommending for approval the proposal submitted by Wangari Maathai Community School.

SchoolWorks acknowledges that the Commissioner's final recommendation to the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education will consist of a review of SchoolWorks' ratings, feedback, and recommendation regarding the quality of the proposal, a review of public comment, and a review of a local impact analysis.

Essential Strengths of the proposal:

- The Educational Program is guided by five principles: 1) Welcoming in; 2) Building Resilience; 3) Love of Learning; 4) Opening Doors; and 5) Stewardship. Each principle provides building blocks for the entire program. The applicant group describes Project-based Learning (PBL) "as the primary vehicle for bringing life to the school's vision of connecting students with their community." PBL will be implemented across all grades as the driving instructional approach. A project-based rubric, as well as a project design checklist, are included as Appendices. These provide guidelines or criteria for successful projects such as authenticity, student voice, reflection, critique and revisions, and public product. Each project will be designed around an essential question. "Big Ideas of Sustainability" will serve as a framework for determining the focus of the school's expeditions.
- The school will be governed by a Board of Directors. The Board will include members with a diverse range of skills and experience in education, administration, financial management, academia, and community engagement and include at least two parents of current students. Committees will include Board members, as well as non-voting members of the community. The proposed school has already identified an Executive Director who is the founder of the proposed school.
- Community partners include (but are not limited to) Woonasquatucket River Water Shed Council, Southside Community Land Trust, and RI Environmental Education Association (RIEEA). The application includes letters of support as well as Board member résumés indicating a relationship with partners. Members of these groups will participate in the launching of the school, join the Board of Directors, or assist with strategic planning. In addition, they will support students and the school's mission by mentoring students or by attending mission-aligned presentations and celebrations.
- The application budget does not appear to underfund any areas that would preclude the applicant group from successfully implementing the operational plan presented. Based on the plan presented, the school would not be in jeopardy of becoming insolvent or suffer from liquidity issues. The financial plan currently shows the school ending Year 2 (\$186K) through Year 5 (\$338K) with six-figure net incomes. Those surpluses on a year-to-year-basis would allow the school to build a healthy reserve and remain solvent year-to-year.

Essential Concerns with the proposal:

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- The need for the proposed school is not clearly evidenced. The application states that the Providence schools have faced challenges in meeting the needs of low-income students, citing four middle schools and one elementary school as requiring a Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSP I). Providence has 22 elementary schools (2 with CSIP) and 7 middle schools (5 with CSIP). The application does not provide sufficient comparable data to explain how the proposed school will enhance or expand existing opportunities in this community, nor does it indicate any nearby elementary schools from which they will draw students who are underperforming. During the interview, the group explained that an elementary school near the location where they hope to secure a building, was rated 1 star in 2018 and 2019 for safety, engagement, and belonging. Another nearby school was rated 2 stars for serving English Language Learner (ELL) students and students with disabilities. The applicant group believes their model of welcoming will meet the social-emotional needs of the community but does not provide compelling evidence of this need.
- The application states that they have conducted outreach to community members; however, it is not clear if these events focused on the educational and programmatic needs of students. The application describes past community outreach. However, it is not clear exactly which founding members participated, how many families they reached, or what the focus was for each event. When asked about recent community outreach in the interview, the applicant group stated they have started to reinstate families who applied previously and are planning on setting up virtual meetings once the building is secured. However, they did not describe details of community outreach that has taken place since the winter of 2019.
- Overall, the application does not present a cohesive curriculum plan. The applicant group describes areas of study specific to the mission; however, the narrative lacks specificity. For most grade levels, there is no explanation of what standards or topics will be taught in what grade level(s) or when it will be introduced. Although the applicant group plans to hire a curriculum consultant, the roles and the expectations of that position are unclear. The application does not describe how the school will manage the development, evaluation, and refinement of curriculum. There is no clear timeline for completing the development of curriculum for Year 1 or beyond.
- The applicant group does not provide a comprehensive description on the data process. It lacks specificity on how the data will be used and by whom. For example, it states that student performance measures will be designed to align with standards so it can be analyzed for reteaching. There is no discussion of structures, such as data meetings or protocols for conducting this type of work. During the interview, the applicant team stated that they believe that traditional ways of looking at data are not applicable, especially in the time of COVID. The applicant group has a holistic and informal approach to data, sharing they will look at teacher growth via walkthroughs, as well as examine non-specified interim data and social-emotional learning (SEL) outcomes. The applicant group did not articulate a well-thought-out plan for collection and use of data.
- The application includes multiple errors in the finance section. There is a mathematical error in the budget related to teacher salaries which impacts the overall projected net income. Additionally, there is a discrepancy in the student enrollment numbers between the financial plan and the narrative and in terms staffing. In the interview, the Executive Director (ED) took ownership of the errors and stated they were made last minute prior to the application submission.

By signing this Comment Cover Sheet, I hereby declare that I have reviewed and commented on the aforementioned request for charter school expansion, and that I have no known conflicts of interest with the individuals submitting the request.

Paige Gonzalez

Signature

11/20/2020

Date



December 4, 2020

Dear Commissioner Infante-Green,

Please accept this letter from the Wangari Maathai Community School applicant team in response to your recommendation not to approve our school. We are deeply disappointed and disheartened by this decision especially given the relentless optimism and commitment to bringing this project to Providence's children our team has shown over the last six years. The SchoolWorks reviewers, though highlighting a few areas of concern, gave their overall approval to our proposal, placing implicit confidence in our team's ability to successfully open and run a new school. In fact, our proposal met or mostly met 95% of the standards evaluated.

We'd first and foremost like to emphasize the fact that **our school was preliminarily approved in 2017**. While our 2020 application was updated and trimmed down from the original 80 page single-spaced 2017 version, the educational philosophy and operational structures we laid out previously, stayed intact. It was a good idea then and it is a good idea now *especially* with the new reality of the Providence Public School District, *especially* as we all come through the COVID-19 pandemic and crave a fresh start and meaningful connections. The need for a high-quality school like ours hasn't changed but become *more* necessary.

Indeed, we thoughtfully looked at the findings of the Johns Hopkins Report and highlighted throughout our new proposal the ways in which we planned to "expand and enhance" opportunities for Providence students. Some of the major takeaways from the report indicate that families and students do not feel heard, do not feel included in decisions, and do not feel like their voices are heard or respected in our city's schools. **We received all yes's** from SchoolWorks for the sections related to our guiding principles, school culture, teachers, and family-school partnerships, the very areas where Providence schools are the most lacking. We believe Wangari will be successful because of our deep commitment to creating a school where everyone is welcome, where teachers are valued and want to work, and where students want to be everyday.

The RIDE team references a "struggle" to meet pre-opening requirements in 2019 however, in the end, we had checked all the boxes save one: securing a lease. This did, indeed, lead to the devastating collapse of our carefully laid plans and it was, in large part due to a lack of support from the John Hope Settlement House community. We'd like to be clear that this was a small, albeit vocal, group that included adults without school-age children and who no longer lived in Providence. The public opposition to our locating the school at John Hope was not indicative of citywide opposition, but rather had everything to do with the fact that the **John Hope community** felt left out of the conversation happening between our team and the John Hope Board. This was not opposition to our school or even to charter schools per se, but to us using a building that had symbolic meaning to many. It is also important to note here that we received more public comments in support of our school than the last round, and **zero opposition** (last time we had about 4-5 statements against the project.)

As you know, siting a school in Providence is a tremendously hard task as most buildings will not meet the regulations by DEM laid out in the Safe Schools Siting Act. We spent more than a year looking for a suitable building last time around and considered or toured over 30 potential sites. One of those buildings changed hands last summer and became available as a potential home for our school. It does not hold the same emotional and personal value for the neighborhood as did the John Hope site. Additionally, we have learned from our past experience that laying the groundwork early with neighbors and elected officials is key to smoothing the way to a lease and community buy-in. We have already had a positive conversation with Councilwoman Mary Kay Harris (one of the opposition leaders in 2019) about the building in her Ward and she has expressed enthusiasm for the idea. At her suggestion, we have been waiting to engage with neighbors until we get the signal from DEM that we can move forward.

Since submitting the proposal in September, we have also garnered support from Mayor Elorza and have spoken to or reached out to other City Council members. We have stayed in touch with families who applied in 2019 (about half have children who are now not eligible to apply because they are outside the grade levels being offered) and previous non-profit supporters, and have continued to seek out conversations with new community organizations like Oasis International, the Boys and Girls Club of South Providence and the West Elmwood Development Corporation. Clearly, face-to-face outreach efforts with families have been thwarted by the pandemic, but we planned to send fliers/emails and Zoom invitations to all our community partners serving families once receiving preliminary approval. We would still post fliers in local corner stores, libraries, and doctor's offices, but would rely much more heavily on reaching housebound families through non-profits serving vulnerable populations. These families were already hard to reach, but the pandemic has isolated them even further and working within the structures already set-up, will help us communicate more broadly. There is also the challenge of bridging the broken trust that families have in "the system," another piece of the puzzle the Johns Hopkins Report highlighted. Families struggle to participate, understand or simply have faith in systems which they feel do not have their best interest at heart nor will make change.

Finally, our plan for curriculum is to pick up where we left off in 2019: consult with a curriculum specialist to add a scope and sequence for second grade, adjust the previously developed fifth grade scope and sequence to accommodate a fourth grade, finish fleshing out planned Expeditions/social studies units, and reconvene our curriculum/educator team to begin writing plans. This would happen as soon as we receive preliminary approval and culminate at our August Summer Institute with Wangari teachers weighing in on and amending curriculum before it's rolled out in September. There will be constant monitoring and feedback loops between and among teachers and the Principal to make adjustments during the school year and time has been set aside in our calendar for weekly grade-level meetings and an in-depth review process in June. This would also be the time when curriculum for new grades would be refined. Our model, while flexible and malleable, will still rely on a solid ELA curriculum from EngageNY and all other curriculum will be tied to the Common Core State Standards as stated in our proposal. We further anticipate spending the first trimester catching students up after a disruptive year and a half of schooling due to the pandemic.

In closing, we strongly urge you to reconsider your recommendation to the Council. Our community is not satisfied with the choices in education currently available. The existing institutions do not resemble Wangari's unique program and it *is* the alternative that Providence families are looking for. *This* is what change and

progress looks like: a way of learning that will set a new standard for success, engaged minds, compassionate hearts, and life long learners who will make a difference in the community and in the world.

Help us echo the sentiments of our community and the needs of our children.

With all due respect,

Siobhan Callahan and the Wangari Maathai Community School applicant team



Wangari Maathai

Local Impact Analysis for New Charter Request

Local Community: Providence

Proposal Overview

Proposed Charter Overview			
Charter Type:	Independent	Year Opening:	2021-22
Location of School:	Providence	Grade Level (At-Scale):	K-8
Enrolling Communities:	Providence	Enrollment (At-Scale):	378

Summary of Proposal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsored by the Southside Community Land Trust Proposes an immersive, place-based learning model that implements a student-centered, experiential curriculum and integrates health and wellbeing, social justice, and environmental sustainability Intends to serve students and families of diverse racial, social, and economic backgrounds The applicant submitted new school applications to RIDE in 2016 and 2017, and was preliminarily approved in 2017; however, it was unable to open due to a lack of facility.

Proposed Enrollment			
Charter Year	School Year	Grades	Total Student Enrollment
Year 1	2021-22	K-2, 4, 6	130
Year 2	2022-23	K-3, 5-7	194
Year 3	2023-24	K-4, 6-8	236
Year 4	2024-25	K-8	278
Year 9 (at-scale)	2029-30	K-8	378

Enrollment Assumptions & Comparisonⁱ

Demographics of Enrolling Communities		
Demographics (%)	Providence	State Avg.
Economically Disadvantaged	84.5%	47.7%
Multi-Lingual Learners	33.1%	10.7%
Differently-abled students	14.7%	15.7%
Minority students	91.8%	44.8%



Wangari Maathai Local Impact Analysis for New Charter Request Local Community: Providence

How does the charter's projected enrollment fit within the overall portfolio of Providence students?	
Enrollment Category	Student Enrollment
Total # of students enrolled in Providence Public School District (PPSD)	23,836
Wangari's at-scale enrollment as a % of PPSP's enrollment	1.6%
Total # of students residing in Providence ⁱⁱ	29,650
Wangari's at-scale enrollment as a % of total # of students residing in Providence	1.3%

Educational & Programmatic Impact Analysisⁱⁱⁱ

2019 RICAS Grades Performance Comparison

RICAS Results	English Language Arts (% Meets & Exceeds)			Mathematics (% Meets & Exceeds)		
	Proposed Charter	Providence	State	Proposed Charter	Providence	State
Grade 3	-	26.4	47.9	-	17.0	36.1
Grade 4	-	15.2	37.2	-	14.1	32.6
Grade 5	-	19.9	39.1	-	12.9	30.1
Grade 6	-	18.0	39.1	-	12.2	27.9
Grade 7	-	8.6	31.5	-	8.0	27.6
Grade 8	-	14.9	36.3	-	7.0	24.5

2019 RICAS Subgroup Performance Comparison

RICAS Results All Tested Grades Demographic Breakdown	English Language Arts (% Meets/Exceeds)				Mathematics (% Meets/Exceeds)			
	All	Econ Disadv.	Multi-Lingual	Differently-abled	All	Econ Disadv.	Multi-Lingual	Differently-abled
Proposed Charter	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Providence	17.2	15.2	5.5	11.4	11.9	10.4	**	**
State	36.5	22.5	7.9	6.1	29.8	15.7	6.3	5.0

Student Demand Analysis for Grade K-8 Charter Seats ^{iv}	
Number of 2020-21 Charter Applications for grades K-8 from Students Residing in Providence:	9,728
Number of 2020-21 Charter seats offered for grades K-8 from Students Residing in Providence:	682
What % of 2020-21 Providence K-8 lottery applicants were offered a seat?	7%



Wangari Maathai

Local Impact Analysis for New Charter Request

Local Community: Providence

Fiscal Impact Analysis

Educational funding dollars follow each child to the school of their choice. The following analysis projects the total amount of funding that would follow students to the school of their choice, commensurate with the size of the requested expansion.

Providence Student Funding Projections	Projected Per-Pupil Funding
Local Share – Projected FY21 per-pupil funding for each Providence student ^v	\$4,570 per-pupil
State Share – Projected FY21 per-pupil funding for each Providence student ^{vi}	\$11,806 per-pupil
Federal Share – Projected FY21 per-pupil funding for each Providence student ^{vii}	\$2,000 per-pupil
Projected FY21 total per-pupil funding for each Providence Student (i.e. RIDE projects this amount of total local + state federal per-pupil funding for each Providence student in FY21)	\$18,376 per-pupil
Less: 7% withheld from the local share of per pupil funding for “fixed or unique” costs ^{viii}	\$320 per-pupil
Local Share – Projected FY21 per-pupil funding for each Providence student, less the 7% withheld for “fixed or unique” costs	\$4,250 per-pupil
Projected FY21 total per-pupil funding for each Providence Student (excluding funds withheld for “fixed or unique costs”)	\$18,056 per-pupil

Total Pupil Funding Projections, Commensurate with New School Proposal:

Fiscal Year	Proposed Charter Projected Enrollment	Projected Total Local Share Pupil Funding commensurate with the requested new charter proposal	Projected Total Local Share Pupil Funding as % of PVD FY19 Total Expenditures ^{ix}	Projected Total Pupil Funding (Local+State+ Federal) commensurate with the requested new charter proposal	Projected Total Withholding for Fixed or Unique Costs (to district)
FY 2021-22 (Opening)	130	\$552,500	0.13%	\$2,347,280	\$41,600
FY 2022-23	194	\$824,500	0.19%	\$3,502,864	\$62,080
FY 2023-24	236	\$1,003,000	0.23%	\$4,261,216	\$75,520
FY 2024-25 (at-scale grades)	278	\$1,181,500	0.27%	\$5,019,568	\$88,960
FY 2029-30 (at-scale enrollment)	378	\$1,606,500	0.37%	\$6,825,168	\$120,960

Key implication: RIDE projects on an annual basis by FY2029-30, commensurate with the new school proposal reaching full enrollment at-scale, total funding of \$6,825,168. \$1,606,500 of this \$6,825,168 will be contributed through local share funding. This \$1,606,500 represents 0.37% of PPSD’s total reported FY19 expenditures.



Wangari Maathai

Local Impact Analysis for New Charter Request

Local Community: Providence

ⁱ Enrollment Assumptions and Comparison based off 10/1/19 reported data publicly available through RIDE's FRED database.

ⁱⁱ Inclusive of independent and catholic schools as available through RIDE's FRED database.

ⁱⁱⁱ Academic Outcome data is based off published assessment results for 2019 available through the public Rhode Island Assessment Data Portal. *Data is suppressed to ensure confidentiality because the minimum reporting size requirement (10 students) is not met. **Data is suppressed to ensure confidentiality because greater than 95% of students did not meet expectations.

^{iv} Demand analysis is based on the most recent lottery data available through the RIDE Charter School Applicant Report. Reporting sizes of less than 10 are suppressed for student privacy.

^v Assumes constant Local per-pupil funding, net of a constant withholding for fixed or unique costs.

^{vi} Assumes constant state per-pupil funding.

^{vii} Federal funding assumed constant and based off district averages.

^{viii} Withholding for fixed or unique costs is the greater of either: 1) 7% of the per-pupil local share funding; or, 2) the per-pupil value of the districts' fixed or unique costs district's statutorily defined expenditure categories minus the average expenses incurred by all public schools of choice for those same categories of expenses. Assumed constant in projections.

^{ix} Total FY19 PPSD Expenditures: \$438,019,645 (all expenditures based on most recent, audited UCOA data)



Office of the Auditor General

State of Rhode Island - General Assembly
Dennis E. Hoyle, CPA - Auditor General

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December 2, 2020

Angélica Infante-Green, Commissioner
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Commissioner Infante-Green:

I write regarding the charter school application to create the **Wangari Maathai Charter School**, an independent-type charter school. The Southside Community Land Trust is the establishing entity for this charter school proposal.

While the charter school application is being considered for preliminary approval by the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, the Auditor General is required, under section 16-77.3-2(b) of the RI General Laws to:

- Review the financial records of the establishing entity, the financial plan for operating the charter school, and the financial integrity of the organization submitting the charter school application; and
- Provide an initial determination that the nonprofit organization is financially responsible.

The Southside Community Land Trust is a qualifying nonprofit establishing entity as provided in section 16-77.3-1 of the RI General Laws. We have reviewed the preliminary information supplied by the Southside Community Land Trust and the primary contacts for the Wangari Maathai Charter School which included the Wangari Maathai Charter School application, preliminary budgets, and an audit of the financial statements of the Southside Community Land Trust for the year ended December 31, 2019.

We find the non-profit establishing entity to be financially responsible; although we note that, the charter will be held in the name of the Wangari Maathai Charter School.

We understand the RI Department of Education is not recommending the charter school application be considered for preliminary approval by the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. Consequently, we have not prepared a summary of preliminary conclusions resulting from review of the charter school application and related materials.

We emphasize that we have not considered or evaluated the educational plan proposed for the Wangari Maathai Charter School for its soundness from an educational perspective or for compliance with various federal and state educational requirements. We believe consideration of those requirements is appropriately within the purview of RIDE and its independent consultants engaged to review the application.

Angélica Infante-Green, Commissioner

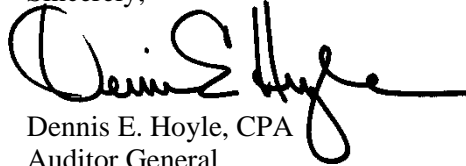
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Additionally, we have not considered the potential financial impact on any local education agency which may send a student to the proposed Wangari Maathai Charter School.

Please contact us should you have any questions regarding our review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis E. Hoyle", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dennis E. Hoyle, CPA
Auditor General

c: Speaker Nicholas A. Mattiello
Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio
Council on Elementary and Secondary Education
Stephen Osborn
Paula Barney
Jermaine Curtis
Yovanny Vargas
Siobhan M. Callahan
Margaret DeVos